

SHINN HISTORIC HOUSE AND ARBORETUM
1251 Peralta Boulevard
Fremont
Alameda County
California

HALS CA-12
CA-12

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

SHINN HISTORIC HOUSE AND ARBORETUM

HALS NO. CA-12

Location: 11251 Peralta Boulevard, Fremont, Alameda County, CA
Lat: 37.56462 Long: -121.97923

Significance: The Shinn House and Arboretum is significant because of its association with three generations of the James and Lucy Shinn family who were pioneer agriculturalists and nursery owners that founded a nursery in 1856. They supplied orchard stock to the area growers for two decades. Their interest in plants led them to collect and grow a tremendous variety of trees and other plants. The first Japanese-style garden in California was built on the site and remains today.

History: In 1876, James and Lucy Shinn acquired 150 acres in Fremont, California where they built a redwood, Victorian-style ranch house and an arboretum that includes many exotic trees and rare plants. In 1962, their granddaughter Florence Mayhew Shinn donated the family home, gardens and arboretum and associated farm buildings, on four and one half acres, to the City of Fremont.

James Shinn also owned a quarry that provided aggregate for the track bed for the transcontinental railroad and for the new University of California campus as Berkeley where his son and daughter Charles Howard Shinn and Millicent Washburn Shinn were some of the first graduates. Charles was a journalist who wrote for "The Overland Monthly" and was recognized for his environmentalist activities and as the first superintendent of Yosemite National Park. In 1890 the youngest son Joseph Clark Shinn took over management of the pear orchards and gravel pits.

There is a cottage on the property that was built in 1840, a packing shed, a potting shed, farm equipment and other structures associated with the commercial nursery.

Today the property features many exceptional specimen trees including: *Ginkgo biloba*, *Ficus macrophylla*, *Quercus suber*, *Castanea sativa*, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, *Cryptocaria rubra* and others. An oval-shaped pool includes a cherub fountain outside the front door and an elaborate arbor wraps around three sides of the front of the house.

Sources: "Shinn Family Contributions To The Community" by Jill Singleton, Museum of Local History. www.museumoflocalhistory.org

City of Fremont, www.ci.Fremont.ca.us

Tri-City Voice newspaper, www.tricityvoice.com

Roadside Arboretum, www.Fremontica.com

Site visit by Chris Pattillo made on January 1, 2009

Historian: Chris Pattillo, January 2, 2009
pattillo@PGAdesign.com
PGAdesign
444 17th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 550-8855



Figure 1. Ornamental iron gate at site entrance showing curvilinear lawn planted with specimen trees and the vine-covered arbor at the front of the Shinn house.

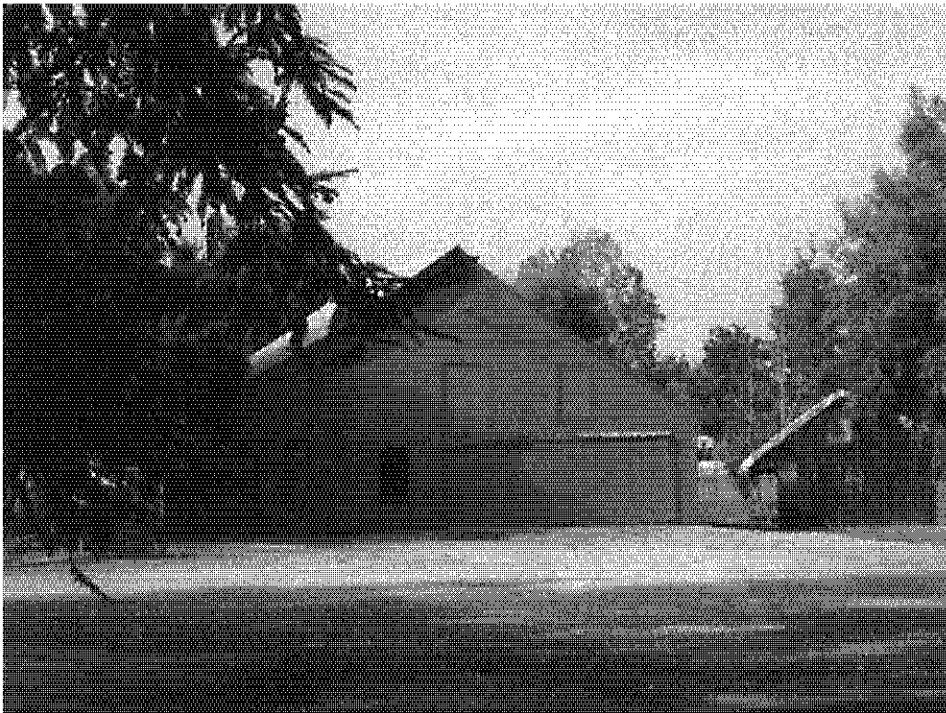


Figure 2. Barn and other outbuildings on the property.